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The Excellency and Reward of Charity.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the *Parish-Church* of

St. *SEPULCHRE*,

M A Y the 20th, 1725.

Being *Thursday* in *Whitsun-Week*;

A T T H E

Anniversary Meeting of the *CHILDREN*
Educated in the *Charity-Schools* in and about the
Cities of *LONDON* and *WESTMINSTER*.

By *WILLIAM BERRIMAN*, D. D.

Rector of St. *Andrew's Undershaft*.

*Publisb'd at the Request of the Gentlemen concerned
in the said CHARITY.*

L O N D O N,

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THE
SERMON
Preached in the Parish Church of
St. Andrew's, Bristol
on the 11th of June 1755
Being the 1st of the Fasting Season



By
WILLIAM BARNARD, M.A.
Curate of the said Church
Printed by J. BARNARD, at the
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Bristol



PSAL. cxii. 9, 10.

He hath dispersed, he hath given to the Poor ; his Righteousness endureth for ever ; his Horn shall be exalted with Honour.

The Wicked shall see it, and be grieved ; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away ; the Desire of the Wicked shall perish.



AMONG the various Methods of giving Glory to G O D, it is none of the least considerable, to celebrate the Acts and the Reward of his Saints. Whilst he is acknowledg'd for the Author of their Virtue and their Happiness,
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there will be no Danger of declining by this Means to Superstition and Idolatry ; the *Creator's* Power and Goodness will be observ'd resplendent in his *Creatures*, but not the *Creature* worshipp'd instead of the *Creator*. So thought the holy Penman of this Psalm, who undertakes to set forth the *Praises of the Lord*, by declaring the *Blessings of the Man that delights in his Commandments*. In the Process of which Argument, the Words which I have just now read, do naturally suggest these three Points to our Observation, *viz.*

I. THE amiable Nature of a bounteous and beneficent Disposition : *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the Poor ; his Righteousness endureth for ever.*

II. THE Happiness or Reward consequent upon it : *His Horn shall be exalted with Honour.* And,

III. A farther Illustration of this Matter, from a View of the Reverse, in the Character of the evil and worldly-minded Man : *The wicked shall see it, and be grieved ; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away ; the desire of the wicked shall perish.*

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To begin therefore with the

I. *First*, THE amiable Nature of a beneficent and bounteous Disposition is here considerable in these three Views, *viz.*

1. IN the general Notion and Exercise of this Virtue; *He hath given to the Poor.*

2. IN the great Extent of it, its diffusive Quality: *He hath dispersed*, or (in the old Translation) *He hath dispersed abroad*, not confined himself to one or two such Acts of Charity, but repeated them with Frequency, and spread them with Discretion.

3. IN its Duration and Influence on future Times: *His Righteousness endureth for ever.*

1. *First* then we will consider the general Notion and Exercise of this Virtue: *He hath given to the Poor.*

As Mankind is manifestly form'd for Society, so 'twould be impossible for any of us to subsist in any comfortable Manner, without the Assistance and Help of one another. The Necessities of Life are so manifold and various, that they cannot be supplied all by the same Hand, or find sufficient Relief in any one Condition of Life, without receiving from abroad. Yet such has been the Bounty of Divine Providence, that for the most Part we receive over and above in one Respect, as much

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as we fall short in another ; that so by parting with that which is superfluous, we may be able to procure for our selves what is necessary or convenient. Thus, if one be possessed of a greater Share of Money or Goods, yet another may have greater Strength or Skill to labour, may be Master of more Activity of Body, or Sprightliness of Mind. Each contributes in his Turn to supply the others Defects, and receives from him in Exchange what may be proper to accommodate himself. And if there be some in such unhappy Circumstances, as to be altogether destitute of any Method to provide for themselves, yet the Generality of Men are so much happier, as either by the Patrimony of their Ancestors, or by the Acquisitions of their Industry, to enjoy more than is necessary to their own Subsistence, and out of that are able to supply this (otherwise) deplorable Deficiency.

FROM hence then it appears to be a Principle of Nature, that all who have Ability, whether of Purse, of Body, or of Mind, are bound to consider the Necessities of other People, and spare some decent Proportion of their own Superfluities, to supply them in such Manner as their respective Exigencies call for Help.

THE Voice of Nature, in this as well as other Matters, is confirm'd by the unerring Precepts of Reveal'd Religion, whereby not only they who are *rich* in Possessions, are strictly enjoin'd to be *rich* also in *good Works*; ^{1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.} but even they who earn their Living by hard Labour, are taught to make it one End of Industry in their Vocation, *how that so labouring they ought to support the Weak*, or such as are not in Condition to support themselves, and not think it enough *to work with their Hands the Thing which is good*, unless they have this View in doing it, that they *may have to give to him that needeth*. Nay, it carries the Obligation to this Duty so high, arising from the Nature of that Stewardship with which GOD has entrusted us, as even to term it by the Name of *Righteousness*, implying, that however Men may flatter themselves with an Opinion of their strict *Justice*, when they commit no open Outrages upon their Fellow-Creatures, yet it is really impossible to be *just* or *righteous*, unless they moreover do them such good Offices, and relieve their various Wants and Exigencies in such manner, as may answer the End for which GOD gave them Ability to do it. ^{Acts xx. 35. Ephes. iv. 28.}

THAT Word indeed is used, after the *Hebrew* Idiom, to denote all Virtue and Goodness in the

the general*, as being that Debt which we all owe to GOD, to whose Honour and Service all our Faculties and Powers will be but justly dedicated. But it is more strictly applicable to the Instance of Almsgiving or Liberality †, because that is more directly done in Execution of a Trust, and by disposing of the Goods which are committed to us, according to the Designation and Will of the Proprietor. And if the same Term of *Righteousness* be sometimes used to express the Divine Mercy and loving Kindness towards Men, which

* A Man of Virtue and general good Character is, in the Style of Scripture, ἀνὴρ ὁσιος, *Luke i. 6. and ii. 25. Acts x. 22.* From whence the same Persons, who stand opposed, *Mat. v. 25.* under the Terms πονηροὶ καὶ ἀγαπῶντες, are presently after term'd ὁσίοι καὶ ἄδικοι. This is plainly an Imitation of the Hebrews, with whom אִישׁ צָדִיק *Gen. vi. 9.* is a Man of a good and upright Heart; from whence the צָדִיקִים are frequently opposed to the רָשָׁעִים and חַטָּאִים as in *Psal. i. 5.* The Use of the Substantive is the same. *If ye suffer (says St. Peter) ὁδοὶ δικαιοσύνης for Righteousness Sake, happy are ye, 1 Pet. iii. 14. i. e. for the Sake of Virtue and Religion.* And so in *Prov. xi. 5. צֶדֶק תְּחִי חַסֵּד the Righteousness (i. e. the Integrity or accomplish'd Virtue) of the perfect shall direct his way, but the wicked shall fall by his own Wickedness.* The LXX Version of these and other Passages in the Old Testament, will sufficiently account for the Continuance of the same Style by the Writers of the New.

† Accordingly it is the Character which the Psalmist gives of the righteous וְנוֹתַן חֲנוּן וְרַחֲמִים צָדִיק *Psal. xxxvii. 21. The righteous sheweth Mercy and giveth.* In which Passage, tho' some Jews (in *Pirke Avoth. c. 5. §. 9. vid. & Maimon. & Bartenor. comment. ibid.*) understand GOD to be meant under the Title of צָדִיק or the Just one, yet the Context rather shews it to be the righteous Man.

which is most free and unconstrain'd *; yet it is to be observed that the Word is so applied in Reference only to those Promises, whereby GOD has been graciously pleased (if I may so speak) to oblige himself and convey to us a Sort of Right to what we could not otherwise have claim'd. And so much must be granted also among Men, that since GOD has not expressly named the Persons to whom we are to give, nor the exact Quantity or Sum which we are bound to disburse, there is much after all left to every one's Discretion even in this Exercise of *Righteousness*; and therefore some Share of Commendation follows him who does it liberally and chearfully, it is reckon'd the Result of his own Bounty, it is acknowledg'd as his Gift. So says the Psalmist in the Text, *He hath given to the Poor*. Nay more, as the Practice of our Duty in this Instance, cannot but argue an inward Affection and Sympathy with our Brethren, from hence it comes to pass that this, which is really an

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* As Psal. xxiv. 5. *He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and RIGHTEOUSNESS from the God of his Salvation.* And Psal. ciii. 17. *The Mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his RIGHTEOUSNESS upon Childrens Children.* From hence some have objected against the Account here given of the ground of this peculiar Acceptation of the Word. (vid. Drus. *Preterit.* l. 6. ad 1 Cor. ix.) but I take the Objection to be fully obviated by what is offer'd above.

Act of *Justice*, has yet the Credit to be deem'd an Act of *Mercy* and *Compassion*. Accordingly the Prophet *Daniel* has made use of both these Terms to express the very same Thing, when he advis'd King *Nebuchadnezzar* to *break off* his *Sins* by RIGHTEOUSNESS, and his *Iniquities* by *showing* MERCY to the Poor. The amiable Nature of which Virtue, consider'd thus far in the general, may dispose us the more readily to view it in the

Dan. iv.
27.

2. SECOND Place with Regard to its great Extent and diffusive Quality: *He hath dispersed*, says the Psalmist, or (in the old Translation) *He hath dispersed abroad*, not confined himself to one or two such Acts of Charity, but repeated them with Frequency, and spread them with Discretion.

As they who live on their Estates have a continual Income growing or arising from them, and they who live by Trade or Labour receive a continual Profit and Increase of Gain; so they who have neither of these Methods of subsisting, must have continual Wants to be supplied, and give them fresh Occasions for continuing their Assistance. And withal, it ought to be consider'd, that the Number of the Indigent is great, which should teach them so to husband and manage what they bestow in Charity, that they may make it as diffusive

as is possible, and reach in some Degree or other, to relieve the Necessities of many that are in Want.

To this Purpose the *Dispersion*, or *scattering* mention'd in the Text, is compared by the Apostle (when he cites this Passage of the Psalmist) to the *sowing* of *Seed*, which is thrown out far and wide, and that by any single Cast, but by continued Distributions, till the whole Compass of Ground be provided of a Stock of Seed, sufficient to produce a plenteous Harvest. From which Allusion, the Apostle takes Occasion to pray for such a plenteous Encrease, from what his *Corinthians* had bestowed, to their own temporal Advantage, as might make them in Return still more and more fruitful in these Works of Charity. *Now he that minisreth seed to the sower, both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and encrease the fruits of your righteousness (or Alms), being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness.* ^{2 Cor. ix. 10, 11.}

Nor that they should *scatter* it at Random, and squander it without Discretion! This would be Profuseness instead of Liberality; and by gratifying the vicious Idleness or Avarice of some, would soon exhaust that Stock which ought to be employed for relieving the Necessities of others. As the Husbandman

takes Care that his Ground be first duly prepar'd for the Improvement of his Seed, and throws it not away on Rocks or uncultivated Deserts; so the liberal Man should be careful to bestow his Bounty where it may turn to use and benefit, and spread abroad with greatest Profit and Advantage to Mankind. Thus like *Seed sown*, it may spring up an Hundred fold, and the Relief that is given immediately to one, may in its Consequences reach to many more, if bestow'd upon such Persons, or to such Purposes, as may best justify the Discretion of the Giver, or perform'd in such a Manner, as may render his Example amiable, and provoke many who behold, to imitate, his good Works. Of which we may conceive the greater Hopes, when to the Loveliness of this Virtue in it self, and its diffusive Quality, we shall have added in the

3. THIRD and last Place, its Duration and Influence on future Times: *His Righteousness* (says the Psalmist, *i. e.* as was shewn before, his Charity) *endureth for ever.*

Bp. Patrick in
loc.

THIS some have understood of the Continuance of so bounteous a Disposition, to intimate that the Person here described, is one who is not *weary in well doing*, but goes on from one Instance of this Virtue to another, and is ever producing some new Fruit of Charity.

Gal. vi.
9.

rity. No doubt its Obligation is in this Respect like that of every other Virtue, not to be practised only by Fits and Starts, but to be constant and habitual.

BUT as this Part of the Duty was hinted at before, so perhaps the Phrase might be aptly understood to refer, not so much to the Disposition it self, as to the Continuance of its Effect, and the Duration of the Benefit that is bestowed. We have seen how Discretion is required in the disposing of our Charity; and surely it is one considerable Instance of Discretion, that we dispose it to such Uses, as may render it a standing Benefit. To feed the hungry, is indeed an Act of Charity, enforced as well by the Dictates of Nature, as the Precepts of Religion: But if the Person whom we save from starving, be one capable of doing Service to the World, in that Case we are publick Benefactors to Mankind, and future Ages may reap the Fruit of so well design'd a Liberality. The Aged and the Impotent, no question, ought to be reliev'd: But let no one envy us a greater Satisfaction in what we bestow upon the young and vigorous; not to nurture them in Idleness, but to instruct them in such useful Knowledge, and breed them to such honest Industry, that the growing
Genera-

Generation may be bound to praise our Zeal, and having our Example for carrying on the same Design, may hand it down to future Generations, till the whole *earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

BUT perhaps this Phrase might be yet more properly interpreted, of that Fruit and Benefit which the charitable Man shall find redounding to himself. *His Righteousness endureth for ever*, i. e. it shall always be had in Remembrance before GOD (as is intimated of the

Acts x. 4. Alms of *Cornelius*) and receive such a Reward from him, as will demonstrate that his Substance has not been wasted or thrown away, but discreetly improved to his own greatest Advantage. This will be often seen in the Increase of temporal Blessings to him and his Posterity. *His Seed* (says the Psalmist a few

Psal. cxii. Verses higher) *shall be mighty upon earth, the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches shall be in his house, and his righteousness endureth for ever.* From hence the Apostle seems to have urged this Passage of the Psalmist, to convince his *Corin-*

2 Cor. ix. 8. *thians*, that God was able to make all grace, or charitable Benevolence, abound towards themselves, that they always having all sufficiency might abound to every good Work: and accord-

accordingly subjoins his Prayer, that G O D would actually *multiply* their *Seed sown*, and ^{Ver. 10.} *encrease the fruits of their righteousness*. And if this temporal Increase do not always follow, yet the Psalmist adds, that *unto the up-right there ariseth light in the darkness*, such ^{Psal. cxii.} inward Peace and Tranquillity of Mind, as ^{4.} must more than counterbalance all the outward Evil of Adversity. This is greatly supported by the certain Prospect of more glorious Rewards hereafter, which shall never have an End *, when *the merciful Man* will appear to ^{Mat. v. 7.} be most eminently *blessed in obtaining everlasting Mercy* for himself; when they who have exercised themselves in Works of *Righteousness*, through the Course of this mortal Life, shall receive that *crown of righteousness* and ^{2 Tim. iv. 8.} Life immortal; *which the Lord, the righteous Judge*, has promised them. But this may be consider'd farther under the

II. *Second* Head proposed for our Discourse; namely, the Happiness or Reward, which is annex-

* The Hebrew Phrase in the Text, is not עולם *in seculum*, which is sometimes used of a limited Eternity, but לעד *in æternum*, which seems more expressive of an endless Duration, and is the very same Phrase whereby the Duration of G O D's *Righteousness* is expressed in the foregoing Psalm at the 3 d Verse.
נִקְתָּ עֲמֶרְתָּ לְעַד

annexed to such Beneficence : *His horn* (says the Psalmist) *shall be exalted with honour.*

An *Horn*, among the sacred Writers of the Old Testament, is an usual Emblem of Strength and Power; from whence sometimes it is transferr'd to denote some single illustrious and potent Person. Thus Christ himself is described under the Character of *the horn of David*, to which the Father of the *Baptist* undoubtedly referr'd, when he styled him the *horn of salvation in the house of David*. Agreeably to this, *to exalt the horn*, must signify the displaying or making Manifestation of such Power and Excellency; and that whether in the Way of Haughtiness and vain Ostentation, as when 'tis said to the wicked, *Lift not up your horn on high, and speak not with a stiff neck*; or by receiving some open Acknowledgment and Testimony of it, as when it is said, *for thou art the glory of their strength, and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted*. In which respect the State of the wicked and the righteous are fitly opposed to one another, the former to end in Disgrace and Diminution, but the latter to encrease in Glory and Honour. *All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off: but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted*. To which honourable Exaltation, the Phrase in the

Psal.
cxxxii. 17.

Luke i.
69.

Psal. lxxv.
5.

Psal.
lxxxix. 19.

Psal.
lxxv. 10.

the Text is very clearly determined : *His horn shall be exalted with honour.*

It is said of *Godliness*, or the Practice of Religion in general, that it *has the promise of* ^{1 Tim. iv. 8.} *the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.* But more particularly is that part of *Godliness*, namely Bounty to the Poor, encouraged to trust in the Care and Goodness of Providence, even for temporal Prosperity. *There is that scattereth,* (says Solomon) ^{Prov. xi. 24.} *and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.* Accordingly we find St. James upbraiding the *rich Men* of his Time, that their *gold and silver was canker'd, their riches* ^{Jam. v. 2, 3.} *were corrupted, and their garments moth-eaten; the treasure they had heaped together consumed and moulder'd away insensibly, without doing them that Service which is commonly expected.* And what could be the Ground of this? The Apostle tells you, they had fraudulently *kept back the hire of the Labourers,* ^{Ver. 4.} whose *Cries* had *pierced* into Heaven, and brought down this heavy Vengeance on the Heads of their Oppressors. The Prophet *Zechary* has made the like Representation, that a secret *Curse* from GOD should *enter into the* ^{Zech. v. 3, 4.} *house of the Thief, or him that deals unjustly by his Neighbour, to waste and destroy his*

Substance, in Spight of all his greedy Care to encrease it, and *consume* the very *stones* and *timber* of which his *house* is built.

THE Duty now of Almfgiving (as we have seen) is founded in the Rules of Justice, and the exprefs Command of the Supream Lord and Proprietor of all things, who has not made over his Right to us, but only entrusted us with our respective Stewardships, which we are bound to discharge conformably to his Directions. From hence it is easy to perceive, that they who give not in some just Proportion to that Ability which GOD has given them, detain what really is not their own, and in this Respect stand on the same Foot with them, who spoil their Neighbour by Treachery or Violence, or fraudulently *keep back the hire of the Labourer*. The Portion of the Poor, which lies mix'd and undistinguished from their own, will be likely to draw down such a Curse upon their Wealth, that it shall moulder and consume away, either in their own, or in the next Generation, and leave them miserably poor and destitute, who were too greedily *hasting* to enrich themselves and their Posterity. The Extravagance of some, or the Negligence of others, the Treachery or Violence of wicked Men, or some unforeseen and unavoidable Misfortune, shall frequently
spoil

spoil them of those Riches, which were heap'd up without Regard to that Mercy, which is indeed a necessary Part of Justice, and without which we can never be reckon'd faithful in our Stewardship.

ALL this Danger is lessen'd in great Measure and avoided by him, who being careful to bestow his Alms, in Obedience to the Laws of his Creator, may humbly hope for the special Protection of his good Providence, and such gracious Benediction, as will either encrease his Stores, or else make even a little to be more durable and satisfactory, than all the Plenty and Affluence of the wealthy Sinner, that, according to a pertinent Saying of the *Jews*, his *Alms* may be *the Salt of his Riches* *, as being that which both gives them a Relish, and keeps them from Corruption. That Peace and Quiet of Mind, with which he enjoys the Bounty of his heavenly Father, is of it self an ample Compensation for all his Disbursements of this Kind ; especially if he has this Reflection to add, that he has made Choice of the discreetest and most prudent Method of disposing them. And this present Satisfaction is exceedingly encreased by the

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* מלח ממון צדקה vid. *Buxtorf. Lexic. Talmud. in rad. צדק*
Col. 1890.

Prospect of a more glorious Recompence to come. We are taught in Scripture, that *riches*
 Prov. xi. *profit not in the day of wrath, but righteousness*
 4. *delivereth from death.* And is it not then the
 justest Ground of Consolation, to reflect that
 those Riches, which (if kept) must be so
 useless to our future Welfare, have been laid
 out in such a Manner as to secure it most ef-
 fectually? The Doctrine of the New Testa-
 ment agrees, in this Matter, with the Old:
 Our blessed Saviour represents it as the Test
 of that reckoning he shall make with us at
 the last Day, whether we have duly ministred
 Matth. v. to the various Wants of his afflicted Members;
 35, &c. which he will esteem as done unto himself.
 And therefore St. Paul has pertinently urged
 it as the Ground why *rich* Men should be
 1 Tim. vi. *ready to distribute, and willing to communicate,*
 18, 19. *that so they may lay up in store for them-*
*selves a good foundation (or Charter *) against*
the

* The Word *Συμβολή* seems to be here used in an Accep-
 tion peculiar and Hellenistical. The Hebrew Word, which sig-
 nifies *foundation*, is used sometimes in the Rabbinical Dialect,
 for *tabula contractus*, a Bill of Contract, Bond, or Obligation.
 Accordingly this *Συμβολή* is said to have a *Seal*, as those In-
 struments used to have Seals appendant to them. And as the
 Seal of those Bonds had a Motto on both Sides, so it seems
 has the *Seal* of this *Συμβολή* a twofold Motto, mention'd by
 the Apostle 2 Tim. ii. 19. vid. Sam. Petit. var. Lect. cap. 10, 11.
 quoted by Mr. Mede in his Discourses, p. 82. vid. & Hammond
de confirmat. in presat. & in comment. ad loc.

the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. Then *shall* their *horn* truly be *exalted with* the highest *honour*; they shall receive *Honour* from that Wealth and Plenty, which otherwise must needs have fail'd them, unable to procure them an Entrance into Heaven, or mitigate their Torments in Hell.

NOT that the bare Act of giving Alms can ever entitle us to such a Reward! But when it is given, as 'tis here consider'd, from a religious Principle, it will then be accompanied with other Christian Virtues, all springing from the same Root of Faith and Obedience, which is the very Condition of our laying hold on the Gospel Promises, and entring into endless Felicity. This is to *receive honour from God*, John v. that durable, substantial *honour* which should chiefly be regarded. 44

AND yet besides all this, it rarely happens that Persons of this Character do fail of some Share of Honour and Applause even among Men. For tho' there may be some People malevolent enough, to make this the very Ground for the most virulent Persecutions of their Wit, or their Interest in the World; yet, Thanks be to GOD, Mankind is generally better natured; and it is one Method which Providence takes for the Reward of Virtue, to conciliate towards it the Respect
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and Esteem of Men. Surely then this Virtue, which of all others has the most tender Regards to the Welfare of Society, cannot look to be ill treated, but by those, who are themselves the Pest of Mankind, and Enemies of social Virtue! And what Strefs is to be laid upon the Opposition given by such Persons, we may the better judge, when under the

III. *Third* Head of Discourse, I shall have added a farther Illustration of this Matter, from the View of the Reverse in the Character of the evil and worldly-minded Man: *The wicked* (says the Psalmist) *shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth and melt away; the desire of the wicked shall perish.*

It is the Property of the Devil, not to mistake the Nature of Virtue, and esteem it criminal, but to hate it for this Reason because 'tis good, and therefore most opposite to his Designs. *The wicked**, as his proper Emisfaries, resemble him in this, and grieve to have

* The word רשע *The wicked*, is used emphatically, by the Jews, to denote him who neither gives to the Poor himself, nor can endure to see other People give; whilst he who deserves but one Part of this Character, is only said to have עין רעה בשל אחרים or בשל an evil eye in regard of other peoples substance, or in regard of his own. Pirke Avoth. cap. 5. §. 13.

have the Foulness of their Vices made but the more conspicuous, by being placed near the Light of vertuous Examples. This Dissatisfaction must encrease, when they see that Wealth and Honour, which had glutted their Hopes, all blasted and withering as in a Moment, or even transferr'd to those righteous Persons, whom they were used to treat with scorn and ridicule. And when thus their *Desire* shall perish and come to nought, whilst the *Desire* of those they hate shall prosper and flourish; then Envy will succeed in the Room of Contempt, and what remains for them else, but to *melt* and pine *away* with Grief and Anguish of Heart? Some trifling Pretences they may use, with a View to lessen the growing Reputation of an active Virtue: But they are so plainly the Result of Spight and ill Nature, that they serve oftentimes to no more Purpose than the *gnawing of their teeth*, only to express their own Discontent and Uneasiness, but without being able to molest or injure those they rage against. They may Giant-like attempt a Romantick War with Heaven; but all their Preparations for that Purpose must recoil with double Force upon themselves, and cover them with Shame and Confusion. They may

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endeavour to deface those Characters, which the Creator has imprinted, of the natural Difference of Good and Evil. They may represent Vice it self as serviceable to Mankind, and conducing to the publick Benefit. They may from hence exclaim against the Preachers of Righteousness, as Persons who aim at the enslaving of Mankind to Virtue, and restraining the Freedom of their Appetites. Or they may, with open Face, unacquainted with Modesty, and which has lost its blushing Quality; they may make it the very Ground of their Invectives against the most beneficent and charitable Designs, that they tend to remove the Hardships of the Poor, and to instruct the Ignorant. But so long as Reason and good Sense continue, all this *gnashing* of their *teeth*, all this spiteful barking against Virtue, will only serve to make it more illustrious, and thereby to encrease the impotent Rage and Madness of its Enemies.

AND if such be the Effect of their Malice in the present Life, that, instead of injuring those they rage against, it usually turns but to their own Vexation; how much more, when the Scene shall open in the Life to
 Prov. iii. 9. come, when they who have *honour'd God*
with their substance shall receive from him
 more

more abundant *honour*; and they who have *despised* him shall be covered with Shame and Reproach. Their Rage will then be aggravated by Despair, and their Envy rise in Proportion to the Glory of the righteous. They shall continue then to *gnash* their *teeth*, (the wretched Amusement of that cursed State!) as well in Grief and Anguish for their own Torments, as in Rage and Envy at that abundant *Honour* which is done the Saints. Like that *Old Serpent*, whose *Seed* they are, they may raise their Heads with spiteful hissings: but impotent shall be their Malice, being likewise made Subject to the Serpent's Curse, to crawl and feed on *Dust*, whilst the Gen. iii. 14. Objects of their Hate are exalted among the Stars of GOD, and placed far above out of their reach. Their Rage therefore and Bitterness may encrease without End; but it will only serve for an Increase of Torment to themselves, so long as they can take no other but the miserable Revenge of *gnashing* their *teeth*, and biting their Chains, and roring everlasting Blasphemies.

AFTER all this Enlargement on the Terms and Phrases of the Text, it will be no hard Matter to descend to a more special Application of it to the good and pious Occasion
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of our present Meeting. The training up of Youth in such Nurseries of Knowledge and Virtue, is no question in it self a good and useful Design. They who are placed in any easy Circumstance of Life, do plainly confess it to be so, when they take Care, as in a Matter of great Moment and Concern, that their own Children may not want the Advantage of such useful Education. And if some Parents are not in Condition to make the same Provision for their Children, or dying leave their Case yet more deplorable, there can be little doubt, but here is Room to exercise the Virtue of the Text.

Acts xx.
35. HERE are such Objects proposed, as the Apostle once recommended to his *Ephesian* Elders: They are the *weak*, or such who, tho' oppressed with Hardship and Necessity, are not in Condition by their own Labour to provide against it. Their tender Years are unexperienced in the Cares of Life, and utterly unqualified for the enduring of such Labour and Fatigue, as might be necessary to their own Support. (Besides that it would take up that Time, if they were able to endure it, which should rather be employ'd in the gaining of preparatory Knowledge and Instruction.) And they have this peculiar Advantage

vantage in their Poverty, that the most virulent Malice cannot possibly ascribe it to their Vices and Extravagance. They are as yet below that State of Life, in which they might be tempted to expensive Wickedness; and therefore whatever Necessities they labour under, they can never be imputed to their own Vice or Negligence, but either to the Vices of other People, or to the more immediate Hand of Providence. They are *worthy* therefore, as well in Consideration of their present Innocence, as in Prospect of their future Services: They are *worthy for whom* Luke vii. we *should do this*, for whose Sake we should ⁴ joyn in this charitable Undertaking, both as a Means of relieving their bodily Necessities, and of providing for the Safety of their Souls.

THE Ease which is given their Relations, by maintaining them in some, and by cloathing them in most, of these Schools, considerable tho' it be and a beneficial Instance of Charity, is made yet more extensive, by enabling the Children to provide against future Poverty, that they may not only be no Burdens to the Publick themselves, but may even be helpful to their indigent Relations, who either have not had the same Advantages, or have outlived the Opportunity of using them.

AND if this Care to provide for their Bodies be a Matter of Charity, much more must it be so to supply them with spiritual Food, for the Sustainance and Refreshment of their Souls, inasmuch as the Soul is more to be valued than the Body, and an eternal Life of Joy unspeakable and full of Glory, preferable to this transitory one full of Care and Trouble and Anxiety. Besides that here likewise the Discretion of this Charity appears, as well from the Fitness of the Object, as the great Extensiveness of the Benefaction. For tho' it be confess'd a Matter of Charity, to instruct the Aged in their Duty, to reclaim them from their Errors, and enlighten the Darkeness of their Understandings: yet alas, the Success must be much more dubious, where the Will is grown stubborn, and Errors are inveterate, where 'tis hard to wear out old Impressions, and imprint new; than when the same Care is bestow'd on such young pliant Minds, which having no confirm'd Prejudices to be conquer'd, nor settled Habits of Vice to be extirpated, may with much less Difficulty be so *train'd up in the way they should go*, as that *when they are old*, they may *not depart from it*. Their Precepts and Examples, when grown up, may be useful to instruct Posterity; and this Assistance they receive in Youth,

Prov.
xxii. 6.

Youth, will reasonably dispose them in their riper Age to be helpful in educating others, and so extend the Benefit to many Generations.

THUS your *Righteousness*, which is already *dispersed* and *spread abroad* (as this numerous Appearance of young Children thus carefully brought up, besides the Account of others in distant Places, may fully testify) will *endure for ever* in its Effect and Influence, by helping to improve the Principles and Manners of Mankind, 'till Time shall be no more. It will *endure for ever* in Remembrance before GOD, and as it rises from Obedience to his Will, so it shall not fail of a Reward from him, partly in the temporal Blessings of this present Life, but more especially in the eternal ones of that which is to come.

WHAT Benefits may we not expect from such diffusive and extended Charity! What comfortable Period to the Cries of the Necessitous! What Safety and Quiet to the publick Weal! What Honour to the Religion we profess! What Improvement to Posterity! A Design so much for the Honour of GOD, and for the Advancement of Industry and true Piety, so little chargeable with any sinister Views, and so plainly beneficial in its Effects, both to private Persons, and to publick Societies, to the Church and to the State, to
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the present Generation and to future Ages ; one would hardly believe such a Design as this should meet with any Enemies, who desire to be thought the Friends of Truth and Virtue.

AND indeed it ought to be judg'd no slight Advantage, that some of its Enemies have lately taken off the Mask, and convinced the World, that whatever other Pretences they had formerly used to traduce these pious Seminaries, yet their Intention at bottom was to undermine Religion and Goodness, and by a chimerical Project to advance the *publick Benefit* by the *Ignorance* and *Poverty*, nay, and by the *Vices* of the People. As for the former Objections of *Disloyalty* and *Popery* ; till they had been thoroughly canvass'd and appear'd to be ill founded, (the Method of Education in these Schools being really most opposite to those Evils, and the greatest Care being used to prevent the least Colour of Suspicion ; I say, till these Objections were canvass'd and remov'd) some Persons, who had no ill Will to Knowledge or Virtue, might perhaps be excus'd, if they entertained a less favourable Opinion of a Design which had been represented to them under so ill a Character. But now that Difficulty is so happily clear'd up, we hope the Cause of Vice and Ignorance will never meet with such Encouragement,

agement, but that these Schools will continue to be supported and maintain'd for that very Reason, because they tend to beat it down, and to promote the opposite Interest of useful Knowledge and active Virtue. Their Enemies may *grieve*, and *gnash* their *teeth* (like *the wicked* in the Text) to see them prosper and flourish, and the Promoters of them held in Reputation: They may pine with Envy, and snarl out bitter Invectives; but in this they will only prove their own Tormentors, since the Credit of the Design encreases but the more, for meeting with Opposition from them, whose Commendation would be a Reproach, and their Friendship the most lasting Infamy.

I forbear to pursue the Application to the other Life, in Hopes they may not yet have sinn'd beyond Recovery, but may at length be so ashamed of this unreasonable Opposition to Religion and Virtue, that in the Time to come, their Zeal to promote every Method, which is justly calculated to advance its Interest, may in some Measure compensate for their preposterous Zeal and Infatuation on the other Side; that instead of aiming to destroy, they may henceforth join with us in supporting these pious Nurseries of Youth,
that

that so in the End they may with us receive this comfortable Approbation of our
 Matth. Judge and theirs; *Well done, good and faithful*
 xxv. 21, *Servants, Come ye blessed of my father,*
 23, 34. *inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Beginning of the World.* This GOD grant of his infinite Mercies, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour, &c.

F I N I S.

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